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The Turncoat

Or

Parson Peter

A Play in Four Acts

. By .

Mabel Clare Craft

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Cast of Characters.

REV. PETER MUHLENBERG
NOAH SUTTON
LIEUT. DANIEL HURLBUT
GOULD LEWIS
GEN. GEORGE WASHINGTON
SILAS CROUCH
OLD LEWIS
DOROTHY SUTTON
MRS. SUTTON
ESTHER HURLBUT
MRS. HURLBUT
MRS. LEWIS

Revolutionary soldiers, sentries, a squad of British soldiers, a British and a Continental sergeant, small boys, children, Tory men and women, patriotic men and women, an old man (the bell-ringer.)

ACT I.

Interior of the house of Noah Sutton at Norristown, a few miles from Valley Forge. Time, October, 1777. Noah Sutton, a member of the Pennsylvania Militia, has been fighting with Washington, but has returned home, after being wounded. He is anxious to be well and wild to be off again to rejoin Washington. The scene of the first act is in the dining room of the Sutton homestead., a comfortable house on the outskirts of the town. The Suttons are well off and the room is furnished with substantial Colonial mahogany. As the curtain rises, Dorothy Sutton, a pretty girl of nineteen or twenty, is setting the table for the evening meal. A moment after, the outside door opens, and Noah Sutton comes into the room.

DOROTHY (running towards her father).

Any news, father?

MR. SUTTON.

Yes. A mounted man passed the cross roads this noon and stopped at Hurlbut's for a fresh horse. They met again at Germantown—

DOROTHY.

And we won?

SUTTON, (fiercely).

No, we didn't; curse it. The man said it was Washington's fault, but I don't believe it—some blithering young idiot that Congress has been making an officer, I'll be bound—

DOROTHY (significantly).

Or else Gates was somewhere about.

SUTTON.

The messenger was on his way with despatches to Congress. (With a sob.) We lost almost 700 men, and 400 more made prisoners. A few more meetings like this and we'll have no army left.

(Mrs. Sutton enters. She is a comely matron with a white cap and pretty grey hair, and though a patriot, does not share the ardor of her husband and daughter.)

DOROTHY.

But the British, father—surely the General made them suffer?

SUTTON.

Only 500 killed and wounded together, the messenger said, and they have a whole nation to draw on.

DOROTHY (hotly).

Then why do they have to hire these Hessian brutes if their countrymen at home are so wonderfully brave and so anxious to fight us?

(Sutton sinks into a chair and drops his head in his hands. Dorothy, running up to him, pats his shoulder.)

DOROTHY (cheerfully).

Don't daddie. You'll see. Washington is planning something. Don't you remember how discouraged we were before Trenton? It'll be all right. You'll see. Washington is always right.

MRS. SUTTON (peevishly).

But he's so slow. Why doesn't he do something before all his men are dead? That's what I'd like to know. He always waits until his soldiers are scattered and then he does something that brings them all back.

DOROTHY.

For shame, mother.

MRS. SUTTON.

Well, I'm thankful you weren't there, Noah, anyhow.

SUTTON (fiercely).

Well, I'll be there next time. My wound's all right now, and I'm going back, I tell you—

MRS. SUTTON.

You'll do nothing of the sort, Noah. You must wait 'till spring, at least. You can do no good this winter, and Dorothy and I—

DOROTHY.

Oh, to be a man for a year. Father, you must go back—

SUTTON.

Of course I'm going. Every man is needed now—

MRS. SUTTON (tearfully).

What good can one man do?

SUTTON.

That's what they all think, and Hurlbut says the New

Jersey men are deserting right and left. Every man whose paltry little three months have expired, straightway goes home—

(He paces up and down the room.)

MRS. SUTTON.

Well, if they only signed for three months, I don't see—

SUTTON.

Oh, you don't understand. If we were all as selfish as that, we'd soon have no country to fight for.

MRS. SUTTON.

Noah!

(The door opens and Hurlbut enters. He is a young fellow, scarcely 22. He wears the blue and buff of a Continental lieutenant, for he is home on furlough for a few days.)

HURLBUT.

Good evening, friends. Bad news from the front, sir, isn't it?

SUTTON (gloomily).

Yes. What's to be done next?

HURLBUT.

Heaven knows. They say the General isn't discouraged, but everybody else is.

DOROTHY (hotly).

A bad time to be taking a furlough, I should think.

HURLBUT (apologetically).

Well, Dorothy, you know I had to come home. I go back to my regiment at the most in a day or two.

MRS. SUTTON.

Dorothy, you are most uncivil.

DOROTHY.

Well, if I were a man no power on earth should keep me away at this time. The General needs every man. even boys—(looking at Hurlbut.)

MRS. SUTTON.

Oh, well; we lived before under King George, and I daresay we can manage again—

SUTTON.

Never! My ancestors fled to Holland to escape the Charleses, and we'll move on again if necessary—out beyond the frontier. or into French territory. I'll never be an English subject again, so help me God.

MRS. SUTTON.

Well, don't get excited about it. You'll feel different when the time comes. I'll go to no frontier. I'm English.

SUTTON (fumes impotently).

Polly, you sometimes exasperate me beyond endurance. I tell you I'll never live under King George again—damn him.

DOROTHY (wickedly).

Oh, if Parson Peter could hear you now!

SUTTON.

Well, he can't. I'm getting sick of his Tory leanings. He and the Lewises ought to be helped out of town on a rail.

MRS. SUTTON.

Noah, I'm surprised at you. And at you, too, Dorothy. "Parson Peter" is very disrespectful from a young girl. You don't know the rector, do you, Dan'l? He came since you went away. He's a very handsome young man of excellent family—his mother was an English woman—of good family, too. He was brought up in England, and so, of course—

HURLBUT.

I hear he's a very fine fellow.

MRS. SUTTON (with the admiration of a Colonial).

Yes, he is a fine fellow, and college-eddicated. I think he admires Dorothy.

HURLBUT.

Oh, I spoke too soon.

DOROTHY.

Well, he'd best keep his admiration to himself. I'll be civil to no Tory.

SUTTON.

Good for you, Dorothy. What a pity it was a girl.

DOROTHY (bitterly).

Well, you can't regret it half so much as I do, father. Suppose you had to sit and spin and weave and sew (viciously) while every nerve in you was throbbing with the desire to carry a flintlock and—

(A knock on the door. Dorothy opens it to admit Muhlenberg and Gould Lewis. Both are young men. Muhlenberg wears the dress of a clergyman of the English Church. Lewis is dressed in the butternut clothes of the well-to-do farmer. Both are young men, Muhlenberg perhaps 25 to 30, Lewis 19 to 20.)

MUHLENBERG.

Good evening, Mrs. Sutton. Good evening, Miss Dorothy.

MRS. SUTTON.

Good evening, sir. I think you do not know Lieutenant Hurlbut? He is one of your parishioners, sir.

MUHLENBERG. (eying the young Colonial critically).

I know your father well, sir. You are not afraid of showing your colors, I see.

HURLBUT.

No man need be ashamed of these colors, sir.

DOROTHY.

I never liked you half so well before, Daniel.

MRS. SUTTON.

Mercy on us! I'm so sick of this war talk. Let's talk of something else, for pity's sake. How's your mother, Gould?

LEWIS.

Quite well, Mrs. Sutton, thanks. Molly's going to Philadelphia in a few days, though, to visit her friends, the Spooners. They say Howe will winter there, and there will be gay doings. Molly's fond of skylarking, you know. You'd like to see her new dresses, Dorothy.

DOROTHY (with her nose in the air).

Oh, homespun's good enough for me, Master Lewis, while our men are suffering for everything. (Wistfully) I expect Molly's things are pretty, though. I would come over to see them, but I'm afraid we'd quarrel. We disagree on everything now.

LEWIS.

Well, father says he hopes the war will go right on. It makes good markets and high prices.

SUTTON.

Oh, yes, Gould, as long as your father can sell his produce down the river to the British, Miss Molly will have plenty of finery, no doubt.

LEWIS.

The last time they never asked him how much he wanted, but just poured his hat full of gold—

SUTTON.

Well, I'd be ashamed to own it. Judas Iscariot sold his—

MUHLENBERG.

Friends, friends—

MRS. SUTTON.

Noah, your temper gets very bad. Gentlemen, draw up your chairs to the table. It's a very modest supper. I'd be glad to have peace if only for the sake of a good cup of tea, for Noah won't let me—

DOROTHY.

Mercy, mother, I'd rather drink artichoke leaves forever than to pay them a tax on tea—

(The door bursts open and Esther Hurlbut rushes in. She is but seventeen. Her hair streams out behind her, and her bonnet is hanging by its strings. Everyone jumps up.)

ESTHER.

Dan'l, Dan'l, father says to come home at once. The British have crossed the river and the fleet is attacking the forts. The General has sent out mounted men to rouse the country. I'm going on to West Chester to warn the minute men. They'll have to look out for the stores, for they say Fort Mercer's sure to fall. The Hessians are on the other side. Darby's almost dead on his feet. Can I have the roan, Dan'l?

HURLBUT.

Indeed you can't. I'll want her myself. I must go back to-night.

ESTHER.

Will you lend me a horse then, Mr. Sutton?

SUTTON.

I wish I could, Esther, but I've lent everyone of them except Dolly to our men, and I shall want Dolly myself to-night to get to Washington.

MRS. SUTTON (appealingly).

Oh, father.

(Mrs. Sutton clings to her husband, and Dorothy gives Hurlbut her hand for a moment.)

MRS. SUTTON (crying, while her husband pats her back)

I do try to be brave, Noah. I know you think I don't. But it's the hard labor of waiting while you go in search of danger. My husband, oh my husband.

DOROTHY (also throwing her arms around her father).

The woman's part is the terrible waiting: That is some of Eve's curse, I suppose. But we've something to think about, too, mother. We can help Washington, you know.

MUHLENBERG.

We who must stay at home will try to look after them, Mr. Sutton.

ESTHER HURLBUT (running to and from the veranda windows).

Huh, you can't do anything. They shot Betsy Ward's husband down the road—right over her shoulder—he was sick in bed, too. Sometimes a man's not much better than a woman.

DOROTHY.

Oh, poor Betsy! And all the little children. That was a brave thing to do (looking at Muhlenberg) to shoot a sick man.

SUTTON (unwinding his wife's arms).

We'll be caught like rats in a trap if we don't hurry. Come on Hurlbut.

(Chorus of goodbyes.)

(Sutton and Hurlbut grasp their guns and hurry out. The others watch them from the windows.)

ESTHER (almost in tears).

But I'm losing time, and I must have a horse. Oh what shall I do? (Turning to Gould) Gould, lend me yours?

GOULD LEWIS.

Not much. What under the sun would father say if I did—to warn West Chester! Well, I'll bet I wouldn't be too big to get a licking.

ESTHER (tartly).

Very well, sir. So a licking's the worst thing you can think of. Mr. Muhlenberg, I'm afraid I'll have to appeal to you. It's only a loan, you know.

MUHLENBERG (hesitating).

You're a brave girl, Miss Esther, and I don't like to seem discourteous, but—

(Dorothy has been signaling to Esther, who was too excited to see her. Esther goes over to her. They talk an instant.)

ESTHER.

Really I'm very much obliged to you. The messenger thought it was important to have the militia turn out, but everybody here seems to think his own plans too important. My, but men are unselfish. Wish you had a horse to lend me, Dorothy. Well, Darby'll have to struggle along, that's all—I'll get to West Chester to-night if I have to go on my knees every foot of the way. Goodby, Mister Gould Lewis and Mr. Muhlenberg.

(She laughs in the parson's face and runs out of the door. The men start to follow her.)

DOROTHY.

Oh, Mr. Muhlenberg, there is something I wanted to say to you.

(He turns toward her, his face lighting up.)

MRS. SUTTON (to Lewis).

I want to send some of my last baking to your mother, Gould. Your father and Mr. Sutton are bad friends, but your mother and I don't forget that we were brought up together.

(They leave the stage talking together.)

MUHLENBERG.

What is it, Miss Dorothy?

DOROTHY (looking up at him roguishly).

Nothing, except that you'll have to ride Darby home, Mr. Muhlenberg, for unless I'm mightily mistaken, that witch, Esther Hurlbut, has borrowed your horse.

MUHLENBERG.

God! (He runs to the window.)

DOROTHY.

Don't be profane, Mr. Muhlenberg, it ill fits your cloth. She won't ride him to death. She had to have him. And if you want to blame anyone, give me my share, for I told her to take him. There's more at stake than any man's property.

MUHLENBERG (biting his lip).

I should have thought of that. The chit will be thrown off and killed. He's a wild young nag.

DOROTHY.

Oh don't you bother about that. We don't ride to hounds in this country because we don't believe that any man has a right to ride over any other man's land, but Esther can ride better than you ever dared to.

MUHLENBERG.

I know you all ride well—women as well as men. Well I hope she won't get killed, that's all. I'd rather have her warn West Chester than have her hurt.

Really, that's very good of you, Mr. Muhlenberg. We

DOROTHY (mockingly sweeping him a courtesy).

rebels appreciate your willingness to lend your horse to our cause.

MUHLENBERG.

Don't you think you're a bit hard on me, Mistress Dorothy? I can't help my ancestry and my bringing up. You've no idea how hard this is for me. I'm pulled both ways.

DOROTHY.

Yes, and it's easy to see which side pulls the harder.

MUHLENBERG.

Dorothy, you're always hurting me nowadays. If you loved me even a little you'd not be forever reminding me that this wretched business is between us.

DOROTHY.

I love no King's man, sir.

MUHLENBERG.

You never consider for a moment the way I'm torn—Church, mother, tradition and education on one side—you and my birthright and more than half my parishioners on the other. God, but I'd give years of my life to see the right of this.

DOROTHY (sarcastically).

I shouldn't think it was so hard to see the right. It's always pleasanter on the winning side. But you needn't think, sir, because we've lost all this summer and fall that we're going to lose in the end. If we lose there'll not be a single one of us alive to mourn over it.
(She bursts into tears.)

MUHLENBERG (too much excited to try to calm her).

Every night when I lie down I fight this battle out again in my soul, and every morning when I get up there is the same old problem ready to begin the day with me. What ought I to do? My God, I have prayed over this thing until I am sick of it, and I presume the Diety is, too, but I get no sign. My heart is divided down the middle and one half of it is with the blue and buff and you, and the other half with my Church, my mother, and my king. Dorothy, can't you understand the vows I took when I became a priest of the Church of England, the traditions of my English College, and my allegiance to my king? Thank heaven, my mother never lived to see this day, but she knows, Dorothy, and I can't have her disappointed in her son.

DOROTHY (with dignity).

I don't know why you are telling me this. A man's doubts are never pretty things. I assure you that these

squirmings of your soul are not of the slightest interest to me.

MUHLENBERG (as though he had not heard).

And I please no one. Only the other day one of the Lewises called me a turncoat and accused me of disloyalty to King George because I could not pronounce Washington a traitor. I have always prayed for the judicial mind, but this ability to see both sides of a question is a fatal gift. It seems bound to make shipwreck of my happiness.

DOROTHY (softly).

And of mine.

MUHLENBERG.

More light! More light! If I could but once bring myself to see that one side is wholly right, the other wholly wrong, I could turn my face to the right and never regret the consequences.

DOROTHY.

Oh, indeed?

MUHLENBERG.

Now, there's Washington.

DOROTHY (fiercely).

Don't you dare—

MUHLENBERG.

He thinks he's right and his courage is superb. But lots of good men have been mistaken.

DOROTHY.

Bad men have always said so.

MUHLENBERG.

And look at the Congress. There's surely nothing to respect there. They squabble and fight. And that time-server Gates may down Washington yet. There's no patriotism there. Most of them are patriots because they think it pays.

DOROTHY.

Oh, well, if you want to hide behind their skirts. Look here, it's easy to find arguments when the other side's winning. You're like all the rest of the Tories—you want to be on the side that'll win, and you make sure that your British regulars and your hired Hessians can put our farmers and shop-keepers to flight. Well, I shouldn't wonder if they could. It would be a poor tale if men who make a business of fighting couldn't. But I don't see that that makes any difference as to the right and the wrong

of the question. You've read our Declaration—you know it rings true in every line. You know why we're fighting and you know about every drop of patriot blood that has been spilled. Who fired first on the minute men at Concord, that's what I'd like to know? You know we're right, Reverend Peter Muhlenberg, only your English stubbornness and your stiff Church of England notions won't let you acknowledge that you're wrong. I should think your Dutch ancestors and your Dutch name would be ashamed of you, Peter Muhlenberg. I was brought up to love the name of England, and the Suttons were as good Englishmen as any of you, but I hate the very name of England now. The true Englishmen are the Americans, and you know it. Do you think we braved King John at Runnymede and cut off Charles' head to have the divine right of kings and taxation without representation choked down our throats at this late day? Read your English history, Mr. Peter. And there's plenty of Englishmen in England who agree with me, too, I'll tell you.

MUHLENBERG.

You arch-pleader, you. An advocate was lost in you when you weren't a man.

DOROTHY.

O, yes, the country lost a good deal when I was condemned to petticoats. But if I were a man I'd be doing something more important than arguing with you, I'll tell you that.

MUHLENBERG.

But Dorothy, all this does not prevent me from loving you.

DOROTHY (saucily).

But it prevents me from loving you, which is quite as important.

MUHLENBERG (laughing).

Do you think so?

DOROTHY.

Oh, quite, sir. I had rather marry Dan'l Hurlbut, who has asked me, and who is on **our** side, than the best Tory that ever walked.

MUHLENBERG.

But you don't love Hurlbut. I'm not exactly a Tory —certainly not the best one that ever walked—you'll not marry a man you don't love.

DOROTHY.

I'd rather marry a patriot that I didn't love than a Tory that I did—only, of course, I couldn't love a Tory.

MUHLENBERG.

But I'm not a Tory.

DOROTHY.

Yes you are. Everybody who isn't with us is against us. Patrick Henry says so. Congress may not be patriotic, but we have our Patrick Henrys and our Adamses as against your fine King George.

MUHLENBERG.

I hate a woman talking politics. Coming back to the question of loving. You must marry somebody.

DOROTHY.

I don't admit it. Father says he doesn't care—that I'm different from other girls.

MUHLENBERG.

That's true enough. But this war can't last always. Unless the English win quickly, the men at home will be tired of paying taxes. I know them. And afterward, Dorothy, come be my rebel.

DOROTHY.

Never, sir. Love me, love my country and my cause.

MUHLENBERG (playfully).

Love me, love my country and my king.

DOROTHY (angrily).

Do you want me to hate you.

MUHLENBERG.

But, Dorothy, consider—if you cannot be consistent.

DOROTHY (snappishly).

Only fools are consistent.

MUHLENBERG.

You have your mother's temper.

DOROTHY.

You're not obliged to endure it, sir.

MUHLENBERG.

Oh, come, come. Be a little patient with me. I'm trying to be a neutral. God knows it's hard enough. Don't you know that I ran away from college to join the dragoons and only came back to please my father? I love a fight. But I'm a clergyman—I must minister to my flock, and I have sheep as well as goats, you know, Dorothy—to say nothing about spitfires. It is the place of a man of God to belong to neither side—

DOROTHY.

O fudge! You'll try to be politic and carry water on both shoulders, and you'll end by having both sides hating you. You might as well make up your mind that everybody won't like you. Choose whom you want for friends, and let the others go.

MUHLENBERG.

That sounds well, but here am I—on the one side church and mother and college and country— and on the other side you—you that I love. I simply cannot take sides, Dorothy, though heaven knows it's hard enough for one of my temper. But I must have you.

DOROTHY.

No. No neutrals for me. How can you see our men, without the clothes, without the food, the guns, the powder they ought to have, fighting so splendidly for a principle which is the cause of Liberty itself, and then urge your Church, your family, your college, as reasons for not joining them? No sir—Dorothy Sutton marries no traitor to liberty—not now nor at any other time. I'd rather be a spinster (making a little grimace) to the end of my days and keep a dame's school where I shall teach little patriots of the glorious days of '77, and the triumphant ones of '78—I verily believe. Oh, I shall be a great history teacher, and then you'll be sorry. Neutral indeed—you're a weather cock, now bowing to this breeze, now to that.

MUHLENBERG.

Almost thou persuadest me, Dorothy. But then we'd agree on everything and there'd be nothing to quarrel about.

DOROTHY.

Oh, there'd be plenty to quarrel about. But do you really want to be convinced?

MUHLENBERG.

Before God, I do. My heart is all your way. I feel as though I were falling between two stools. I'm neither one thing nor the other.

DOROTHY.

Poor man, and you admit it.

MUHLENBERG.

I want to win you, Dorothy, but more than that I want to be right.

DOROTHY.

That's the spirit; I like you better now.

MUHLENBERG.

On the Judgment Day I want to be able to say that I answered the call of my conscience.

DOROTHY (very happy now).

The Judgment Day's a long way off—the worst thing about it will be its publicity.

MUHLENBERG.

How do you mean?

DOROTHY.

Oh stupid—anyone would know you were German and English—the secrets of all hearts are to be revealed, of course.

MUHLENBERG (smiling).

And are you afraid of having yours known?

DOROTHY.

Oh, we shall all be too busy trying to hide our own nakedness to notice the disclosures of our neighbors. But, don't you see, the Tories will find out how we Colonials reinforced our army—by making men fall in love with us first and converting them afterward—but it'll be too late for them to make use of it then.

MUHLENBERG.

Oh, you are too clever for a woman.

DOROTHY.

Another thing for us to quarrel about! Hark! (runs to window.) There go the West Chester militia down the river road (with a sob) Esther must have ridden like the wind. And toward the enemy too. Brave little girl!

(A boy bursts in the door. His eyes are wide with terror. He has no hat, and his long hair stands out from his head. He yells shrilly,

BOY.

Run, run for your lives. The British are not a mile down the road, burning and sacking as they go.

(He runs out. The audience can hear his shrill shouts as he tears past the window.)

(Mrs. Sutton and Gould Lewis rush in.)

LEWIS.

What's that?

DOROTHY.

The British are coming and the farm houses are burning. (To Muhlenberg.) That's fine warfare. They'll be setting the Indians on us next.

LEWIS (grabbing his hat).

I must go. Father's down in the wood lot and not a man about the place.
(He rushes out.)

MRS. SUTTON.

Dorothy, the stores, the stores!

DOROTHY (in a fearful voice).

Mother. Hush!

MUHLENBERG.

Come with me to the church. They won't molest that.

MRS. SUTTON (breathlessly).

Yes, Dorothy.

DOROTHY.

No. I shall stay here. You go with Mr. Muhlenberg, mother.

MUHLENBERG.

And leave you here alone? Nonsense.

MRS. SUTTON (almost in tears).

Do come, Dorothy. What does anything matter but our own safety.

DOROTHY.

Something matters a great deal. There is one thing a woman can do in wartime—be true to her trust. Stay or go, as you like, mother. I stay here.

MRS. SUTTON (taking off her bonnet and cloak, which she has been tying on).

Then I stay, too, of course.

MUHLENBERG.

And I, but we'd have been better off at the church.

DOROTHY.

But I wish you to go, Mr. Muhlenberg. There is that to do which a woman's wit can accomplish better without a man's interference. Please trust my judgment (very sweetly). I can't explain, but I'm surely right. Please go.

MUHLENBERG.

This is awful. I should feel like a coward running away.

DOROTHY.

Well, you're not. You're only a man not in a secret. Some day I'll tell you.

MUHLENBERG (going).

Goodbye. God bless and keep you both. I'll be out again in a little. I must know how you fare.

(Dorothy and Mrs. Sutton put the room to rights quickly. They remove powder horns and a picture of General Washington, and then sit down at the table. At the same moment a voice is heard outside shouting the order, "Surround the House; fall in." The door is opened from without to show a British sergeant with a squad of British regulars behind him.)

SERGEANT.

Good evening, dames. Sorry to disturb you, but we must search your house.

(Mrs. Sutton and Dorothy rise and courtesy during this speech.

DOROTHY.

We are all loyalists here. You may search an' welcome, sir.

SERGEANT.

Where are all your men folks?

DOROTHY.

My mother is a widow, sir, and I'm her only child. The servants are the only men about the place, and not many of them. Will you search, sir?

(The sergeant glances about the room, and, preceded by Dorothy, opens doors to right and left. One door he overlooks.)

DOROTHY.

Will you go above stairs?

(Sergeant motions to two of his men, who go upstairs.)

DOROTHY (coyly).

But there soon will be a man about the house, sir, for I'm to be married.

(Mrs. Sutton looks amazed.)

SERGEANT.

I'm sure he's much to be envied, miss. I hope as he's worthy.

DOROTHY.

He certainly is. He's an English gentleman.

SERGEANT.

Indeed, miss.

DOROTHY.

May I offer you a cup of tea? We're on rather short rations, like everyone else—money's so scarce—but we shall be selling stores to your army now, we hope. Oh, you've no idea how glad we are you've come. I can't tell you how we feel about it.

(She pours the tea. The men return.)

THE MEN.

Nothing there, sir.

(Mrs. Sutton serves them tea in an outer room.)

SERGEANT (between mouthfuls).

We didn't go into the front room.

DOROTHY.

No, I have in that room my bridal clothes and would rather not show it, but if you insist, I shall certainly let you see it.

SERGEANT (looking at her fixedly).

I believe you. I'll not look at the room. Good night.

(He goes out with his men. Dorothy courtesies, then drops into a chair.)

MRS. SUTTON.

Well, you beat me. You took my breath away.

DOROTHY.

Thank God, he believed me.

MRS. SUTTON.

Oh, you could always twist the men around your fingers. In Salem they'd have burned you for a witch.

DOROTHY (laughing happily).

What a flatterer you are motherkins.

(The door opens suddenly. The sergeant, very red, stands on the threshold. He walks straight to the door that was omitted, opens it and disappears within. Two soldiers follow him. Dorothy drops her head into her arms with a cry.)

MRS. SUTTON.

Who could have betrayed us?

DOROTHY.

You did—to Peter Muhlenberg.

(Muhlenberg enters the room hastily as the sergeant and the soldiers appear from the front room, their arms full of muskets.)

SERGEANT.

Fine bridal clothes, these!

MUHLENBERG.

Dorothy, I had to come. I couldn't—

DOROTHY.

How dare you speak to me? You're no turncoat—you're a traitor.

MUHLENBERG.

What do you mean? Before God—

DOROTHY.

Oh, don't take the trouble to deny it. Who'd believe a traitor? May God punish you for the deed you've done this day.

(CURTAIN.)

ACT II.

The Camp at Valley Forge. The Revolutionary army in winter quarters. Time, the middle of February, 1778. Huts of soldiers are all around. They are made of logs, filled with moss, with rough stone chimneys. Snow falls at intervals during this act. Smoke goes up from some of the huts, and late in the act as twilight comes on, lights glimmer here and there. Back of the huts is the forest; at one side of the stage is a small open camp fire. A sentry paces to and fro. His feet and legs are swathed in rags. Muhlenberg and Mrs. Sutton enter from the right, closely followed by Dorothy and Esther Hurlbut. All are muffled to the ears, wearing furs and tippets. Their hands are mittened and sunk in muffs, and they have baskets of provisions on their arms.

ESTHER.

And you've not spoken to him since?

DOROTHY.

Never when I could avoid it.

ESTHER.

Did you ever ask him why he did it?

DOROTHY.

Of course not. Do you think I have no pride? Father doesn't know yet—about the stores. And oh, our men needed them so sorely, and they were gone—eaten and worn out and shot up by those nasty, greedy Redcoats.

ESTHER.

And you never doubted he was the informer?

DOROTHY.

'Twas as plain as a pikestaff. Who else, pray, knew?

(During this colloquy Muhlenberg and Mrs. Sutton have been looking into various huts. They do not find whom they seek.)

MUHLENBERG (to the sentry).

Can you tell us where we'll find Noah Sutton of the Pennsylvania militia?

SENTRY.

Just over there. That hut in the middle. But he's very bad to-day.

(Muhlenberg and the women go back and disappear within the log house. The sentry leaves the stage, returning at regular intervals throughout the act.)

(Enter two soldiers drawing a sled of firewood.)

FIRST SOLDIER (halting to rest).

Say, I'm awfully sick of all this. Ain't you?

SECOND SOLDIER.

'Tis pretty tough, ain't it, 'specially since the horses died. Haulin' wood's tougher'n pioneerin', ain't it? But the sick'd all freeze 'fore mornin' in this weather athout it. Oh what a wilderness!

FIRST SOLDIER.

Well, I can't see as it's our fault they're sick—I didn't sign to haul wood.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Nor I, neither, but 'tain't anybody's fault as I can see. The horses is dead and the wood's got to be hauled.

FIRST SOLDIER.

It ain't nobody's fault, heh? Why don't Congress send us horses and somethin' to feed 'em with, heh?

SECOND SOLDIER (with infinite scorn).

Congress! Pooh, Congress's as derpreciated as the currency.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Well, Washington's too slow, that's what's the matter. Now, if we had Gates. Jest see how quick he cleaned out Burgoyne. Gates is the boy.

(Muhlenberg comes out of the hut during this speech and stands listening to the soldiers.)

SECOND SOLDIER (laughing contemptuously).

Oh, listen to you for a fool! You allays was a fool. Nahun. I 'spect you can't help it. Believe everything's told you, don't you? Why, Gates simply couldn't help

catchin' that Burgoyne feller. He'd a missed him if he could—allays did bungle everything. And who sent Gates men and crippled his own army to do it? Why, (triumphantly) General Washington, o' course.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Well, how about Adams? He's from my State. Strike's me he'd do better'n Washington.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Oh that's it—every feller pull for his own State. That's what ails Congress. Adams (with infinite scorn) well, his tongue's all right, if he could fight with that, but, in my opinion, he's mean and jealous as a girl.

MUHLENBERG (who has been gradually drawing nearer).

That's a pretty good estimate of Adams, my friend—fights with his tongue. You've got lots of those fellows on your side. Their tongues are ready enough but their arms and their pockets—quite useless, I assure you. But tell me (quizzically) what think you of Howe as a general?

FIRST SOLDIER (grinning).

Howe? Oh he's just nothin' but a ba'r, sleeps all winter. He tried to get us to fight at Whitmarsh, but our general wouldn't. I wisht he had.

SECOND SOLDIER.

We wern't fit then, you fool. I'll tell you, Howe may be sleepin' but the American Revolution is ready to strike the instant he moves. This (with a sweeping gesture) is the American Revolution.

MUHLENBERG.

Oh, is it? But the conquerors of Burgoyne have dispersed to their homes.

SECOND SOLDIER.

All the more reason we should stay here and make ready for spring. Just wait 'till spring (spitting on his hands) when we get after them red coats.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Yes, wait 'till spring. We'll all be in nice straight rows long afore spring, only we'll be a-laying down in rows, 'stead o' standin' up.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Oh you was allays grumbling. You pestered the life out o' your wife—I'll bet she's glad you're shet up in winter quarters.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Yes? Well, I'm tired o' havin' no pillow but jest a a knapsack. Why, on our march yistidday you could see every place we halted by the rags on the ground. Bill Leach's lost a toe—clean froze off.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Pooh, that's nothin'. Wonder he didn't lose his whole foot—he's that slow.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Aw, say now—

MUHLENBERG (to second soldier).

Well, you're certainly cheerful. If all the men are like you Washington'll come out all right. You don't look very warm, though.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Warm? Huh! These regimentals o' mine are more like rags than clothes. Why, I've rigged up better to frighten away the crows in the cornfield, many's the time. But that's nothing. Jest you wait 'till spring. Gee, but I want a shot at a Redcoat with my old Nancy. Jest you wait 'till spring. We'll show 'em. I love a fight and we'll have one then, for sure. It's waitin' that's hard.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Well, starvin's harder. I'd rather have a round o' beef than a round o' shot, any day. Famine ain't nothin' to laugh at as I can see.

MUHLENBERG.

Oh it surely isn't as bad as that.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Don't you pay no attention to him. He's a growler, he is — a perfect b'ar. But our rations is certainly pretty short. We need shoes and clothes and blankets as bad as anything. You can mostly see where we've been treadin' by the blood on the snow.

MUHLENBERG.

Poor lads, what's your quartermaster thinking of?

SECOND SOLDIER.

That's jest it. You see they're tryin' to starve and freeze the heart out o' our General. They don't know him. It makes it kinder hard on the boys like Nahun here as likes good grub, for natcherly the freezin' and the starvin' falls on the men first. But they can't roil our General. If they'd give him a decent quartermaster, he'd give 'em

an army, and then they wouldn't have Ho.'e roostin' warm and comfortable in their capital city. In my opinion—and many others think the same, I'll tell you—Congress is just a lot of old ninnies. It's might easy to draw up pertitions when you're sittin' in front o' a warm fire—but George's the boy. He knows what he's doin'. We may look like a lot o' old scarecrows, but we can drill all right. He's got an idea or two behind those queer eyes o' his that kind a' burn you—whoever lives'll see it. Come on, Nahun. You'll lose more'n a toe if you don't move on.

FIRST SOLDIER (crossly—he has been stamping and rubbing his hands all through this speech).

Who's doin' the talkin', old chatter-box?

MUHLENBERG (musingly).

It's a wonder the men don't desert.

FIRST SOLDIER (eagerly).

That's what I say—desert to where there's good beef and pumpkin pie and—

SECOND SOLDIER.

Oh hush up. Desert? Never—why only last week General Washington tied up my feet with his own comforter. Desert? Not 'till this place is colder'n the North American woods in mid-winter, and I reckon they ain't no such place outside the hymnbook. Desert? May my feet freeze and drop off first. Come on, Nahun. They want this wood, and you'll get into trouble talkin' too much. Desert? Well I never—

(They drag off the wood, the second soldier still fuming and talking. Muhlenberg follows them with his eyes in amused amazement.)

MUHLENBERG.

Well, that's the most unusual private soldier I've ever seen. They don't have that breed in Europe—an American product, doubtless. What a difference from the dragoons.

During the next dialogue the snow falls at intervals; little squads of soldiers cross the stage at the rear. Two soldiers cross dragging an empty sled, entering from the direction in which the others disappeared. One says "Damn Washington!" the other promptly knocks him down. He rolls over in the snow, but picks himself up and they go out dragging the sled and altercating fiercely. The sounds of distant men drilling are heard. Faint voices are shouting sharp, crisp orders. The life of the camp goes busily on as the short winter day draws to its close.

Lieutenant Hurlbut enters. He looks pale and thin. He starts on seeing Muhlenberg.

HURLBUT.

Well, this is a surprise, sir. May I ask what you are doing here?

MUHLENBERG.

Oh, mere escort duty, Mr. Hurlbut.

HURLBUT (a little bitterly).

Few men have time for anything so pleasant these days. I'm surprised you care to be within our lines.

MUHLENBERG.

Well, I seemed to be the only man who could come with Miss Sutton and her mother. Your sister came, too, to see you.

HURLBUT.

Esther? Dear little girl! Dorothy's with her father, of course. (Starts toward the hut, then comes back.) You have just arrived? Then they want to be alone.

MUHLENBERG.

I thought so.

HURLBUT.

And my people. Are they well?

MUHLENBERG.

I believe so. I seldom see them now. My parish is sadly divided. Your family, for instance, seldom come to church now. They think I lean toward England.

HURLBUT.

Well, you do, do you not?

MUHLENBERG.

I have been accused of it, I believe. Yet the Lewises don't think me loyal enough, and they've left too. I was never in such a quandary in my life.

HURLBUT (sneeringly).

You don't seem to know your own mind any more than a woman.

MUHLENBERG (significantly).

The women I know know their own minds only too well.

HURLBUT (brightening).

Does she really? (Looks towards the hut.)

MUHLENBERG.

What she?

HURLBUT (confusedly).

Oh, I don't know—any she.

MUHLENBERG (musingly).

Do you know, I can't think this war was necessary. It would all have adjusted itself in time.

HURLBUT.

This is an odd time to make that discovery. There would have been a Reformation without Luther then, I suppose? You pride yourself so on your Protestantism. You'd all have been Romanists then, and it would have been better—you could not have married.

MUHLENBERG (ignoring the last remark).

Still, you could have avoided force.

HURLBUT.

Aviod force! Didn't we wait until they thought us a pack of cowards? Who fired the first shot? And after Lexington were we to stalk around like sheep, to be butchered one by one as they wanted us. Oh, Mr. Muhlenberg, be reasonable, if you are a parson.

MUHLENBERG.

Thank you.

HURLBUT (listening to the sounds of distant drilling).

This is an army in the making that you hear.

MUHLENBERG.

Oh, indeed.

HURLBUT.

Men say that His Excellency is a martinet, but if he carries any of these men alive through this awful winter he'll have an army—the first we've ever had.

MUHLENBERG.

Well, Gates made a pretty good showing.

HURLBUT (scornfully).

Gates! He couldn't help himself—the enemy made such blunders, and Washington lent the men. Why shouldn't he win?

MUHLENBERG.

Gates doesn't seem to be very popular here. Things are pretty bad in this camp, they tell me.

HURLBUT.

Bad? Why, it's hell! Those sleek, lazy, well-fed blatherskites in Congress, curse them, (I beg your pardon,

sir) are trying to starve us out. Well, just let them try. They're jealous of Washington—the devils—and sometimes I think King George owns some of them.

MUHLENBERG.

Shouldn't wonder at all. I hear they're going to send a commission to investigate you. They think you have been overdrawing your privations.

HURLBUT.

Good God! Let them—the quicker the better. The half hasn't been told. It is a good deal easier to draw up remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fireside than to occupy a cold bleak hill and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets. Are they men that they have so little feeling for our naked and sick soldiers? For they are soldiers—these farmers and blacksmiths and small tradesmen of ours. Washington's soul is wrung by the sights he sees, but while he resents the injustice, it does not lessen his determination to win.

MUHLENBERG.

I've always thought of him as a fine Virginia gentleman.

HURLBUT.

We don't see that side of him—simply a man among men—tender, pitiful as a woman to those poor dogs, and you know the scum always rises to the top—that's the worst of a Republic.

MUHLENBERG.

Can Congress force him out?

HURLBUT.

He'll never go.

MUHLENBERG.

They say he has levied on the country hereabouts and there have been many complaints.

HURLBUT.

He was forced to do it. He can't stop for trifles. Good God, man, we have 5000 sick—do you know what that means?

(Enter sergeant in charge of a foraging party.)

SERGEANT (saluting Lieut. Hurlbut, and holding up a pair of very thin chickens).

Sorry to have to report such bad luck, sir; but the country's been scoured for miles around—nothing but these and a couple of pigs, and a few frozen potatoes.

(The men in the foraging party are exceedingly cadaverous-looking. Their clothes are in rags and their feet tied up in sacks. They carry sacks, which are evidently almost empty.)

HURLBUT (to Muhlenberg).

God—and on this I've got to feed a hundred men—and half of them sick. That'll do, Hicks. Did you go as far as the ford?

SERGEANT.

Three miles beyond, sir, until it came on to snow, and the men could go no further, sir—they were too weak to travel against the storm.
(The foraging party retires.)

HURLBUT (gloomily).

My poor fellows—what shall I do? They waver like drunken men on the march. They're too weak to walk, and they have no proper clothes.

MUHLENBERG.

No wonder you are reduced to foraging.

HURLBUT.

Foraging? Why, man, do you know that for two weeks the well have had nothing to eat but flour mixed with water? It was fried to-day; sometimes we bake it. Scurvy's broken out among the men. I fancy we'd none of us stand it very long but for His Excellency.

MUHLENBERG.

How can the sick get well, how can men drill eight hours a day, as I hear you've been doing, to say nothing of building these houses and hauling wood on such a ration?

HURLBUT (laughing harshly).

They can't; but you sleek fellows at home don't care about that. I'm weak as a cat; Sutton would have been dead weeks ago, but for the soup from the headquarters' table—that's why we worship him—that's why we'd die for Washington.

MUHLENBERG.

God himself couldn't cure a sick man on flour and water by anything short of a miracle.

HURLBUT (bitterly).

There are no more miracles, though Washington exceeds the wonder of the loaves and the fishes every day.

MUHLENBERG.

I should think he would lose all heart, fighting against

the selfishness of his country, the elements, famine, disease, death. Where does he get his wondrous faith?

HURLBUT.

His faith! Why, where you preachers tell us to get ours. Many a time I've seen him down there in the woods, kneeling and praying—you can guess for what. He's the best Christian I've ever known. When we get through with the British I hope there'll be a bayonet sharp enough for a fat capon or two of a so-called patriot— the Congressional kind.

DOROTHY (coming out of the hut. She holds out both hands to Hurlbut, who takes them joyously.)

Dan'l, Esther is dying to see you. She's with mother. Mr. Muhlenberg, mother wants the basket of cordials from the cutter. She says do you mind getting it for her?

MUHLENBERG.

Not at all.
(He goes.)

HURLBUT.

Oh but it's good to see you, Dorothy. (Reproachfully) You've written so seldom.

DOROTHY.

Well, letters don't get through and writing's harder for me than talking, and Esther sends you all the news, anyhow. Nothing ever happens with us. Even the British never come our way—except that one awful time. Give me a piece of wood. (She runs over and knocks on wood three times to counteract her boasting). I don't want to repeat that experience.

HURLBUT.

But I like to get your stiff little pen scratches. I know then that you were at least thinking of me when you wrote. But why one should address one's life-long playfellow as "Esteemed Friend" I can't for the life of me make out.
(He takes out a letter carefully folded, from his inside left breast pocket, unwraps it carefully and reads.)

Esteemed Friend Daniel,

We are all very well, and mother sends her compliments, also some jam. The black cow has a calf, and the weather remains sharp and cold. Your family was in best of health when last seen. Pray present my compliments to your Colonel, and permit me to sign myself—
(Dorothy clutches for the paper, but he is too quick for her.)

DOROTHY.

Oh faugh, I think that's a very nice proper letter for a young lady to write to a rising young officer. I think of you often, of course. How could I help it with dear father here? How bad he looks, Dan'l.

HURLBUT.

Yes, but he's much better now. I m glad you didn't see him a fortnight ago, though I tried hard to get word to you to come. The roads were blocked with snow; it was awful weather, but we thought we were going to lose him, and that unless you came then you would not see him again.

DOROTHY.

Dear father. It was simply his determination to live to help Washington that kept him alive. I never can thank you for all you did. You see we know that you gave him all your blankets and most of your food, and watched over him yourself. You're a good boy, Dan'l, and a kind nurse.

HURLBUT.

Well, it wasn't all for your sake, Dorothy. I have always loved and admired your father. I should have liked someone to look after mine in a similar case. We 'young chaps can stand this and only get a bit peaked and haggard—but it's death on the old ones. Many and many a one we've carried out—splendid old fellows, too, and full of courage, but they just couldn't stand it, and oh, Dorothy, we need them all.

DOROTHY.

Oh what a pity Esther and I can't join you. We're stronger than the old men anyhow. But I can never thank you enough for your care of my father.

HURLBUT.

You needn't thank me at all—just don't love anybody else if you can't love me. That's all I ask.

DOROTHY (laughing).

Is that all? Well, I don't love anyone else. Sometimes I think I hate every man.

HURLBUT.

Even the parson?

DOROTHY.

The parson, particularly. Hasn't Esther told you?

HURLBUT (eagerly).

Told me what? Is there anything particular to tell.

DOROTHY.

Well, I should say so. What a funny girl Esther is not to tell. She's like a magpie for secrets—just hoards them. You know the stores that were at our house? Didn't you ever wonder what had become of them?

HURLBUT.

I supposed they had been sent on long ago.

DOROTHY.

No, indeed. The day that you and father left in such a hurry, when the British marched up the river, a sergeant and squad came to our house. Mr. Muhlenberg and Gould Lewis were there when you left, you remember. Well, when mother heard that the British were coming, she just blurted out "Oh, Dorothy, the stores, the stores."

HURLBUT.

Before Gould?

DOROTHY.

I knew you were going to say that. No, Gould had gone. Only Mr. Muhlenberg was there. He didn't seem to take any notice, and I shut mother up and though he wanted to take us to the church for safety, we decided to stay at home and take our chances. He left then, protesting, and promising to come back speedily. He had only been gone a few moments when the searching squad came. I can hear the order now, "Surround the house, close in." The sergeant was very polite, and I took him into every room except the best one where the muskets and powder and things were.

HURLBUT.

How did you manage it?

DOROTHY (archly).

Well, I told him that I was soon to be married and that my wedding clothes were spread out there, and I'd rather he wouldn't look.

HURLBUT.

And he believed you?

DOROTHY (demurely).

He did.

HURLBUT.

All alike—go on.

DOROTHY (archly).

Well, we gave them some supper—we were just eating —and being men—

HURLBUT.

I understand, go on.

DOROTHY.

They went away, apparently satisfied, and all very friendly, believing us Tories. In a few minutes they were back, bursting in the door without ceremony, and the sergeant marched straight into the front room and found everything. Now that wasn't an accident. While the sergeant was inside, Peter Muhlenberg came—they must have met in the front garden. Of course the thing was perfectly plain. Outside of you and me, mother and father, no one else knew.

HURLBUT.

It doesn't seem possible.

DOROTHY.

No, it doesn't, but how else can you account for it?

HURLBUT.

How, indeed? It's a wonder they didn't make you prisoners.

DOROTHY.

They would have—it took every sovereign we had to prevent it. And all this caused by the Reverend Peter Muhlenberg. Do you wonder I detest him? He must have had a motive—I suppose he wanted to ingratiate himself and save his church. He never thought we'd suspect him.

HURLBUT.

I'm so relieved to find that you don't love him, Dorothy, that I can almost forgive his treachery. I was afraid you did care for him—he's so handsome.

DOROTHY.

He's not handsome. And as for loving him, I hate him. I've never spoken to him since except when it was unavoidable, as just now, but we couldn't have come here without him, and mother still likes him. He denies it, of course, and she believes him.

(Muhlenberg enters with two large, old-fashioned hampers. Hurlbut halts him.)

HURLBUT.

A word with you, sir.

MUHLENBERG (surprised at the tone).

Yes, what's wanted? How can I serve you, Miss Sutton?

HURLBUT.

It's not Miss Sutton you are to serve, but the American Army.

MUHLENBERG.

At its service, I'm sure, though I scarcely understand your tone.

HURLBUT.

You will, directly.

MUHLENBERG (setting down his hampers).

The sooner the better.

HURLBUT.

I expect you to stand by what you just told me, Dorothy. I intend to bring this matter of the stores stolen from the Suttons to the notice of His Excellency.

MUHLENBERG.

And what have the stores stolen from the Suttons to do with me?

HURLBUT.

You are suspected of having given information, sir. And then you dare to come within our lines under pretense of doing escort duty. In my opinion you're a spy in the service of the English government, to learn our strength and our condition. And in any case, the man who would give information of the stores we need so desperately is not the man to have within our lines. If we can't prove anything, we can at least have you run out of the lines before morning.

DOROTHY.

In this weather? Oh Dan'l, Dan'l, what are you doing? Mr. Muhlenberg only came because we asked him to.

HURLBUT.

He worked on your mother's feelings.

MUHLENBERG.

How dare you? This is nothing but your suspicion. Mistress Sutton, it scarcely seems possible that I have you to thank for this.

DOROTHY.

I'm deeply regretful, Mr. Muhlenberg.

HURLBUT (sharply to Dorothy).

You will repeat before His Excellency what you said to me?

(The voices have grown louder, and soldiers with wood sleds, and camp idlers gather around.)

FIRST SOLDIER (same one who was in before).

I thought he was a spy by the way he talked—too cheerful like. And he told the British where the stores were, hey? Good pork and beans belike—and with our insides so empty. Let's hustle him, boys.

OTHER SOLDIERS.

Let's get at 'im! Let's get at 'im!

HURLBUT.

Silence. This is a matter for your superiors. Ah, here comes His Excellency.

(The soldiers fall back, and there is silence as Washington, accompanied by an orderly, enters. Lieutenant Hurlbut and the soldiers salute. Washington is in the act of passing hastily.)

HURLBUT.

One moment, if I may be so bold, Your Excellency. We have a man here who may be a spy.

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

The name, sir.

MUHLENBERG.

The Reverend Peter Muhlenberg of Norristown, sir. I came here as escort for Mistress Sutton and Dorothy, her daughter, who had permission to visit Noah Sutton, who is ill. We had a safe conduct from General Warren. The charge is utterly absurd, sir.

HURLBUT.

This is the man who was responsible for the loss of the stores of Herkimer county, which were captured by a British foraging party last October. Miss Sutton here has just told me that it is her belief that Mr. Muhlenberg informed the British of the presence of the stores, of the whereabouts of which he was aware. The British had passed the house once and failed to discover the stores, but returned after information had been given. Is this not true, Miss Sutton?

(Washington looks at Dorothy fixedly. She drops a deep courtesy.

DOROTHY.

Lieutenant Hurlbut entirely mistook my meaning, Your Excellency. I have no knowledge that anyone informed the British of the presence of the stores in my father's house.

WASHINGTON.

Thank you, Miss Sutton. You have forestalled me, for Mr. Muhlenberg's father and mother were among my

best and oldest friends, and the loyalty of one of their name and blood is not to be questioned. See that Mr. Muhlenberg has the freedom of the camp, Lieutenant Hurlbut. I shall be glad to extend the courtesies of headquarters to you, Mr. Muhlenberg, and to your mother and yourself for the night, Mistress Sutton. I must apologize for the bareness of our larder, but you will understand.

(The soldiers are dispersed by a wave of Hurlbut's hand. That officer salutes hurriedly, and with a deeply embarassed air and a reproachful look at Dorothy, who is staring stonily in front of her, turns on his heel and enters Sutton's hut. The sentry has marched back and is about to be relieved by another. The man who comes in to relieve him is old, with long, thin gray locks. His clothes are very ragged; his feet swathed in rags. He looks ill. Dorothy and Muhlenberg watch him.)

GENERAL WASHINGTON (rather brusquely to the sentry).

Good evening, Baldwin. I'm glad to see that you're able to be out again.

SENTRY (saluting).

It's my night on guard, sir.

WASHINGTON.

Where?

SENTRY.

Before the Star Redoubt.

WASHINGTON.

Did Morgan send you? The snow is badly drifted over there.

SENTRY.

I'll do my duty, Your Excellency.

(Washington removes his cloak, throws it around the man, and leaves the stage, walking rapidly, his head down. The sentry goes out in the opposite direction.

DOROTHY (acting as if she would like to run after Washington and kiss his hand, but restraining herself.)

Oh, God, give victory to this man.

MUHLENBERG (softly).

Thank you for defending me, Dorothy.

DOROTHY.

Oh, I hate myself for it. I feel like a traitor. It makes me hate you.

MUHLENBERG.

Don't say that, Dorothy. Wait a little. You'll think better of me.

DOROTHY.

Never. But, somehow, I couldn't be the one to condemn you. It's part of the hatefulness of being a woman. How could you watch General Washington just now and remain so cold—the saint.

MUHLENBERG (impressively).

Cold? My God! Judge not lest ye be judged.

DOROTHY (angrily).

Oh don't preach at me.

MUHLENBERG (meaningly).

The next sermon I preach you will remember to your dying day, Dorothy Sutton.

DOROTHY (frightened).

What do you mean? Tell me.

MUHLENBERG.

You'll know soon enough. I've warned you. That's all.

(He leaves the stage.)

DOROTHY.

Peter, Peter! You frighten me. Forgive me, I—

(She runs after him.)

The sentry returns, marching slowly, and wearing Washington's cape. In the distance is heard the bugle call, "Taps." Immediately the lights go out in the huts, leaving the stage illuminated by the little camp fire. The snow falls softly and in the distance is heard the call, "Post 10. Eight o'clock and all's well." The sentry leans over, still holding his gun in his stiffened fingers, and warms his hands at the feeble blaze as

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

ACT III.

Time, end of June, 1778. Place, Norristown. The day is a beautiful one in summer, and the stage shows both the interior and the exterior of Muhlenberg's church, the church occopying the left and center of the stage, with the altar at the back, facing the audience (with the ordinary furnishings of a somewhat plain Episcopal church); a choir box, without an organ, and pews at either side (see diagram). At the right, a door leads with a step or two into the graveyard, where the lush June grass is high and the gravestones thick, mossy and tilted. In this churchyard the congregation is gathered, the women in their lawn and muslin gowns and bonnets in the fashion of the period. In the crowd are Mrs. Sutton and Dorothy, Esther Hurlbut and her mother and father, Gould Lewis, his mother and father, some two or three small children, some boys of thirteen or fourteen with their mothers, many young men and two or three old ones. The people are gathered into rival camps of almost equal size, the Tories in one, wihch contains most of the young men; the patriots in another and slightly larger one, in which women predominate. The Lewises lead one faction; the Hurlbuts and Suttons lead in the other. They are discussing the battle of Monmouth, news of which has just reached them, and in their excitement their prayerbooks and the proximity of the church are forgotten.

OLD LEWIS (sneeringly toward the other camp.)

Seems to me the rebels are mostly women—Washington's hard up for friends.

DOROTHY.

You know only too well that our men are all fighting.

ESTHER.

Why don't you go and fight—you're so handy with your mouth.

MRS. SUTTON.

Hush, hush, girls, don't pay any attention to him. It only pleases him.

OLD LEWIS (fuming).

That Hurlbut girl—Gould if you ever dare—

ESTHER.

Oh, pray don't excite yourself. I wouldn't look at a Lewis if he had a hundred times as much gold as you got for giving information of the Sutton stores.

OLD LEWIS.

How dare you, you hussy—(He starts toward her but is pulled back by his son and others.)

MRS. HURLBUT (tantalizingly).

No wonder the old man's sore and his temper upset. This news from the front is enough to make any Tory sit up. I tell you it makes 'em sweat. How do you like to be beat? The good Lord knows we've had enough of it. How does it feel, eh? He, he.

A MAN (from the Tory side.)

O, anything but a crowing woman. There isn't so much to brag about as I can see. 'There's 230 less of you, that's all. You'll have to enlist the women pretty soon.

SEVERAL WOMEN.

We're ready.

OLD LEWIS.

And a good riddance 'twill be. There's too many women farmers nowadays. It makes butter too cheap. They sell for what they kin get. They haven't got sense enough to keep up prices.

DOROTHY.

Oh, yes; you want to screw up the price. You don't mind gouging your own side when they come to pay for provisions—not a bit.

OLD LEWIS.

Hold your tongue. I never did approve of figgerin' for women. You've no business to know anything about prices—leave that to your betters.

DOROTHY.

And who might they be?

A MAN (on the Tory side.)

Ain't ye proud of Lee now? Tell me that. A fine patriot he is—he, he,—fair sample of ye all when ye get a chance—a traitor once, a traitor always—and run like a ferret before a real army—retreated the first chance he got.

ESTHER (stamping her foot and almost in tears with excess of anger).

I doubt not the British bribed him while he was their prisoner—that's their way of fighting. Ten thousand pities he was ever exchanged. I wish he'd rotted there.

THE TORY MAN.

Oh, well, folks, don't roil yourselves. The battle was nothing but a skirmish, anyhow—just wait 'till Clinton gets a good chance. He'll lick your darling George into a cocked hat. Clinton's no Howe.

SEVERAL WOMEN PATRIOTS (laughing shrilly).

No, he's nohow. You told the truth for once unintentionally, Reuben Babcock, ha ,ha, ha.

THE TORY MAN.

Crowing hens, faugh! The battle was nothing—a mere scratch.

DOROTHY.

You lie, Reuben Babcock, and you know it. When **you** win it's a big battle. When we win, it's nothing. Do you think this belittling of our battles is going to change the end, or push it further off? Oh, you'll be crawling in and taking the oath of allegiance to the United States of America one of these days.

ALL THE TORIES.

Never! Never!

DOROTHY.

And when you do I'll press my nose against the window of the court house and make faces at you—death-bed repentence men—that's what you are. I'll tell you what I know about Monmouth—and I had it straight from the lips of the runner himself when I carried him food and drink and gave him my horse—thank God I had one to give him!

SEVERAL TORIES.

You fool, to give him your horse. You'll lose the horse. Serves you right.

DOROTHY.

What do I care? Wouldn't I give my life for my country—what's a horse?

OLD LEWIS.

Horses is valuable, jest now.

DOROTHY.

Oh, you poor old miser. We ought to pity you, not hate you. Your shrivelled soul rattles around like a dried pea in a pint cup. Hear the story of Monmouth—it will make your heart expand. (The crowd gathers around her, the groups partially intermingling, though not losing their definite character.)

Clinton had been harrassed by our brave New Jersey boys and the tongues of his men were hanging out with the heat and dripping like those of thirsty dogs—

A PATRIOT WOMAN.

I'd like to have seen 'em, the dogs?

DOROTHY.

He was making for New York like a whipped cur, and encamped at Monmouth Court House. Lee, it seems, had disapproved of the pursuit from the first—he (scornfully) has an admiration for the British arms, and he said he didn't care to command the advance, so His Excellency gave the coveted place to the brave young Lafayette—

THE PATRIOT CROWD.

Huzza for the King of France! Huzza for young Lafayette!

THE TORIES (scornfully)

His Excellency! Listen to the girl.

DOROTHY.

But at the last moment Lee changed his mind (some men do) and resumed his place—

THE PATRIOTS.

Curse him!

DOROTHY (with growing excitement).

Don't interrupt if you want to hear. Lee's men were eager to fight. He made no plan but fooled around, and finally began to retreat. Clinton, seeing his advantage, was quick to seize it—he's not stupid, like Howe, they say—and pushed on. Washington was hurrying forward with the main army. The men threw away their knapsacks as they ran through the awful heat. The word came that Lee was retreating (Dorothy's excitement grows every moment. Both groups lean toward her breathlessly .Her eyes blaze—she stands like a Joan of Arc. Her bonnet falls to the ground unnoticed. The place is breathless). Then word came to Washington that Lee was retreating. He would not believe it. He simply could not conceive that any officer would retreat as soon as the enemy advanced when he knew that the main army was hastening to his support. Washington spurred his horse and galloped to the front. First he met the stragglers, stragglers (she swallows her emotion and tries to steady her voice) then more and more flying men, then the division in full retreat. At last he saw Lee, and riding straight at him he swore a terrible oath—I couldn't begin to repeat it to you—but it was the first his men had ever heard pass those chiselled lips, and it was so terrible that those who heard it can never forget it. Lee was livid; so was our general. His Excellency asked Lee what he meant by retreating. Lee sank in his saddle like the poltroon he is. "To the rear, sir!" shouted the general. They say it means a court martial.

THE CROWD.

Ah-h-h-h-h.

DOROTHY.

But the master had come. The General called to the men and spoke to them and they took fire from him. Their courage had only ebbed because a coward commanded them, and came back in full tide at his call. They obeyed every order. They were keen for a fight, and they turned and charged. All they wanted was a leader. They rallied and followed our General. The broken divisions were reformed, there under cover of the wood. The main army came up. They charged and repulsed the British—the most surprised Redcoats ever you saw. A few minutes before they had been pursuing fleeing Continentals, and now these same blue and buff fellows were charging them. How they ran! Washington drove them before him like sheep, and occupied the battlefield of the morning.

And when night fell the runner told me that Washington slept under a tree without even a tent, slept, wrapped in his cloak, with his men lying all around him in the warm June night. They intended to follow up the British in the morning, as soon as the men were rested from their long, quick march. But in the morning Clinton was gone—melted like the snow—he had retreated as fast as he could skedaddle, dropping 2000 men by the way. Jersey cost him as dear as Philadelphia did Howe. Not a battle? Why the whole country will blaze with bonfires to-night —fires of joy and exultation, oh, I'm so glad, so glad, so glad—

(Dorothy is in tears, as are most of the Patriots. The Tories are too much impressed to jibe. Just then the church bells ring out slowly with a clear, sweet tone. The bell-ringer is an old man with flowing white locks, much like the old man who rang the Liberty bell in Philadelphia, or the fifer the famous picture—"The Days of '76." As the bell sounds, Muhlenberg enters the churchyard from the right. His parishioners hasten forward to greet him, and crowd around him, shaking his hand. He is attired in the ordinary black of the Church of England clergyman. His hair is powdered and worn in a queue, as throughout the play, He has been away for four months.)

MRS. SUTTON (taking his hand).

Welcome home, again, welcome home, Mr .Muhlenberg. I'm right glad to see you back again. It seems long since we've heard your voice in the pulpit. And we've needed a pastor these four months, besides those junketing ones as just happen in, for they've been dark and troublous times, with many heartaches. Many of us are in mourning, as you see.

MUHLENBERG.

I was sorry not to be with you, but my personal affairs have been most pressing. Have you been well, and Miss Dorothy also?

MRS. SUTTON.

Very well, thank you kindly, and Captain Sutton also, at last accounts.

MUHLENBERG.

I'm glad to hear that—he wasn't wounded at Monmouth?

MRS. SUTTON.

Not as we've heard.

ESTHER.

And your brother is quite recovered, Mr. Muhlenberg?

MUHLENBERG.

He is better, thank you, Miss Esther, but I fear he'll never be a well man again.

MRS. SUTTON.

How sad that is.

Muhlenberg passes on to the other group.

OLD LEWIS.

Glad to see you back again, parson. Let bygones be bygones. Me and my family mean to attend church reg'lar. We've heerd as how you had a conflerence with Howe in Philadelphy.

MUHLENBERG.

I did meet Lord Howe, bue I assure you it had no significance—merely a social meeting—my brother knows him well.

OLD LEWIS.

Oh, Elizabeth wrote it back to us as how you were made much of there.

MUHLENBERG.

Oh, it was nothing, I do assure you. My brother's family is close to those in authority—that is all. It was quite other business that detained me and prevented me from returning as soon as I had expected and hoped. What it was you shall know very shortly. (To them all.) I'm glad that you are all well and to see so many out to-day. I hope that this may be a united parish again as it was once. I shall make my position quite clear to-day.

THE CROWD.

Oh, oh, oh. Did you hear that?

OLD LEWIS.

I'm glad of it—indeed I am. We've been a little doubt-

ful as to where ye stood—at least we were until you went away and we heard o' your doin's in Philadelphy. But it's all right now—I'm sure the parish will be united before long, loyal once more to good King George. There's sure to be a decisive battle soon—that'll send 'em scurrying over to our side. Let the others get out if they don't like it, and build a new church of their own—new churches cost money.

(Muhlenberg passes into the church, through it, and disappears within the vestry.

ESTHER (to Dorothy).

Did you hear that?

DOROTHY.

Yes, what have I told you all along? He was always a traitor and a turncoat. Three months of being dazzled by British gold lace and scarlet has finished him. I shouldn't wonder if his brother's illness were only a ruse, and if he'd accept a commission in the British army. They're after young Colonials, you know. Elizabeth wrote that he was quite gay and much admired by the young ladies of Philadelphia.

ESTHER.

Oh, Dorothy.

PATRIOT WOMAN.

I don't like what he said to old man Lewis. He's not with us—indeed he isn't.

A TORY MAN.

He's not half outspoken enough to suit me. Why doesn't he call Washington a damned traitor, as he is? He speaks in riddles and too respectful-like.

OLD LEWIS.

Let 'em build a new church if they don't like us—let 'em, let 'em. We don't ask 'em to stay. New churches cost money, he, he.

GOULD LEWIS.

Father, try not to think of money all the time.

OLD LEWIS.

Hold your tongue.

(The church bell rings again, slowly and calmly, and the crowd commences to flow slowly into church and take places in the pews. Four persons, two men and two women, enter the box of the choir and take their places. The tenor, a dapper young colonial, sounds a tuning fork. The Tories take places on one side of the church and the patriots on the other, the patriots being on the left in front of the choir. Glowering looks and

tantalizing words are freely exchanged, and fists are almost shaken across the aisle between.)

OLD LEWIS (shaking his fist covertly at Dorothy and Esther.)

You young hussies! How I'd like to box your ears.

A WOMAN PATRIOT.

Hush, this is the house of God.

MRS. LEWIS.

It's Sunday, father.

OLD LEWIS.

Humph, don't care if 'tis. Ain't Sunday as good as enny other day?

(Muhlenberg enters through the vestry door and kneels for a moment at the altar. Everybody stands as he enters and kneels as he kneels. Muhlenberg wears the vestments of an Anglican clergyman about to officiate at service. There is complete silence in the church.

(NOTE—This service may be lengthened or shortened at will, as a number of parts of the service have been omitted for brevity's sake. Nothing is absolutely essential except the opening of the service, the anthem and the prayer for King George.)

MUHLENBERG (standing at the reading desk with his side toward the congregation. the audience rises.)

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

Dearly beloved brethren, the scriptures moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness, and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them before the face of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same by His infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God, yet ought we most chiefly so to do when we assemble and meet together, to render thanks for the great benefit that we have received at His hands, to set forth His most worthy praise, to hear His most holy word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, and humble voice, to the thrown of heavenly grace, saying after me:

MUHLENBERG (kneeling, the congregation kneeling and repeating after him).

Almighty and Most Merciful Father, We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own

heart. We have offended against Thy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare Thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore Thou them that are penitent; according to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And grant, O Most Merciful Father, for His sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of Thy holy name. Amen.

MUHLENBERG (standing. The congregation still kneeling.)

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; and hath given power and commandment to His ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfelgnedly believe His holy gospel. Wherefore let us beseech Him to grant us true repentance, and His holy Spirit, that those things may please Him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at last we may come to His eternal joy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

MUHLENBERG (kneeling).

O Lord, open Thou our lips.

THE PEOPLE (kneeling).

And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

MUHLENBERG.

O God, make speed to save us

THE PEOPLE.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

MUHLENBERG (standing. The people rise).

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. (All heads bow slightly at the names of the Trinity.)

CHOIR (chanting).

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, amen.

MUHLENBERG.

Praise ye the Lord.

CHOIR.

The Lord's name be praised.

(The choir sings the following words to any old-fashioned

tune, the idea being not to make fun of the music, but to show its rather primitive characted.)

We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge. We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood. Make them to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting. Day by day we magnify Thee. And we worship Thy name; ever world without end. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin. O Lord, have mercy upon us. Let Thy mercy lighten upon us as our trust is in Thee. O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded.

MUHLENBERG (Kneeling).

O Lord, show Thy mercy upon us.

THE PEOPLE (kneeling).

And grant us Thy salvation.

MUHLENBERG.

O Lord, save the King.

THE PEOPLE.

And mercifully hear us when we call upon Thee.

MUHLENBERG.

Endue Thy ministers with righteousness.

THE PEOPLE.

And make Thy chosen people joyful.

MUHLENBERG.

O Lord, save Thy people.

THE PEOPLE.

And bless Thine inheritance.

MUHLENBERG.

Give us peace in our time, O Lord.

THE PEOPLE.

Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God.

MUHLENBERG.

O God, make clean our hearts within us.

THE PEOPLE.

And take not Thy holy spirit from us.

MUHLENBERG.

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, high and Mighty King of kings (his voice breaks here with emotion, and he pauses to recover control of himself.)

DOROTHY (who sits in a pew nearest the audience, with Esther beside her, under her breath to Esther).

The prayer for the King.

(Old Lewis openly leers at her. She bites her lip angerly and returns him a glance full of venom.)

MUHLENBERG.

—Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who dost from Thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; most heartily we beseech Thee with Thy favor to behold our most gracious Sovereign Lord King George and to replenish him with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit— (his voice breaks and he again stops to control it, clearing his throat with effort.)

ESTHER.

Well, he needs it—the grace of the Holy Spirit—most gracious sovereign, indeed—setting the Indians on us—

MUHLENBERG.

—that he may always incline to Thy will and walk in Thy way. Endue him plenteously with heavenly gifts, grant him in health and wealth long to live, that he may vanquish and overcome all his enemies (pause) and finally, after this life, he may attain everlasting joy and felicity through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Muhlenberg wipes his streaming forehead. Hearty amens from the Tory side of the church—dead silence from the Patriot side.)

MUHLENBERG (coming forward to the reading desk, but still within the chancel.)

Dearly beloved, it is my duty to make clear to you today how and where I stand upon important matters which are rending this wretched country of ours and have been rending it for almost two long and weary years. It is your right to know these things, and when I remember how this unhappy parish of mine has been torn by bickerings and unneighborly strife, cruel swords and still more cruel tongues, I blame myself, for had I been more outspoken, you might have stood a compact band, shoulder to shoulder to-day. But I have been wrestling with an angel, as Jacob did, and like that ancient patriarch I have had a great struggle. Few of you, perhaps none of you will ever know how duty and sympathy and blood and most sacred vows have warred within me. At last my calling has been made clear to me. The voice has summoned me, and like Samuel of old, I have answered, "Lord, here am I."

(All lean forward breathlessly.)

You know the story of this unhappy strife as well as I do—know it from the beginning to the end which is not

yet, for we have all breathed it, laid down with it, slept with it, gotten up with it, every night and morning for almost two years. You know the story of the dreadful civil feud where brother has stabbed brother and child-country has turned to tear and rend the mother throat. You know by heart, as I do, the story of the war from Concord down, for no foreign war can ever be as terrible or as real a war as this rebellion of a child against its mother—this fratricidal strife.

You know how the minute men, patriot farmers ,fell at the bridge; you know the wild night rides of men—and tender women, too—to rouse the sleeping countryside; you know how the Delaware was crossed; how the ice ground against the cockleshells of boats, the storm, the blinding snow, (a woman sobs aloud) the sleet, and how the carousing Hessians were surprised on the birthday of our Savior. You know the story of Trenton and the Brandywine—each name calls up to you a victory you love to think of—one that makes the blood flow quick and warm through your veins, or a defeat which stings you like a scourge.

My friends and neighbors, it is easy to be heroic; heroes are born and breathe thir natural atmosphere every day. We sing of them and of their brave deeds. But do you know as well, in the story of this terrible war, the tale of the American army starved last winter at Valley Forge; the air white with the wings of descending angels and ascending souls—the souls of brave men who faced death willingly that their idea of liberty might live? They were heroes, too, but you do not know their names, nor do I, and History will not know them, for they starved to death and died for lack of clothes and medicine and care—but died willingly that you and I might live. You have heard of the blood-trodden snow, but you have heard coldly because the bleeding feet did not belong to you or yours. Men (his voice rising) I am not going to argue causes with you. Everyone of you has reasoned it out for himself during these two years, and each one of you know whether or not he believes in taxation without representation, and all the rest of the shibboeths. But I saw those sights of which I speak—the blood-stained snow, the angels coming down and hovering over those huts and never going back empty-handed—I saw the feet that bled; the soldiers who died of privation; the pinched, starved faces; the tattered uniforms; the blue flesh underneath. I saw, too, the man who held that wreck of an army together, who drilled and cheered it, put heart and soul into it; who prayed for it, pleaded with it, cherished it, comforted it in sickness and in health—

And then I went to Philadelphia and I saw, sung,

warm and comfortable, the army of invasion—for the most part guzzling hirelings of the man for whom we have just prayed. They made merry and caroused, and I thought of those others, freezing and praying and hoping for the right in our bitter Pennsylvania woods.

In the language of holy writ there is a time for all things—a time to preach and a time to pray, but these times have passed away. There is a time to fight, and that time is now come. If we win the great prize we fight for, no price can be too great. The agony of my country calls me from the altar with a voice that touches every chord of my soul, a voice that must be obeyed. The time for fighting has come—the time to try men's souls. My sin is that I have waited too long. Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God. Only in a sacred cause would I unsheath my sword and forsake the altar that I have vowed to serve.

Men and women of Norristown, I was with Washington last week, and this is the vow I took—the new oath to which I consecrate my life and strength and all that I am.

"I, Peter Muhlenberg, do acknowledge the United States of America to be free, independent and sovereign States, and declare that the people thereof owe no allegiance nor obedience to George the Third, King of Great Britain, and I renounce, refuse and abjure any allegiance or obedience to him; and I do swear that I will, to the utmost of my power, support, maintain and defend the United States against King George the Third, and will serve the United States in the office of colonel, which I now hold, with fidelity, according to the best of my skill and understanding. Sworn before Almighty God and George Washington."

OLD LEWIS (his white hair flying, his voice hoarse with passion, rises in his place, shaking his fist at Muhlenberg).

You traitor, you. This temple is the house of peace.

MUHLENBERG.

No, by God's rood. He is with us—God is with our righteous cause, and His temples shall be our forts and towers. The time for prayer has past; the time to fight has come. This is the dawn of Freedom's day. Men of Norristown, mark my words—the prayer for George the Third will never be heard within these walls again. To paraphrase, with all reverence, the words of our Lord and Savior, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his sword and follow me." Who dares come out with me in Freedom's name—to live for her, to die for her?

MEN OF THE CONGREGATION.

I, I, I, I.

MUHLENBERG.

Sound the call for recruits!

(At the open door appears the ancient bell-ringer with a fife and a boy with a drum. A trumpeter in blue and buff sends out the call for recruits, and the church bell rings madly, in very quick time, pulled by a small boy. The call for recruits is followed by "Yankee Doodle." Muhlenberg throws off his vestments, revealing himself in the full blue and buff uniform of a Revolutionary Colonel, even to the sword. The cocked hat with a cockade he produces from behind the altar and, coming through the chancel gate, he marches quickly down the aisle. Every man in the house, except old Lewis, even those who have been talking the most ardent Tory talk, presses forward, and, falling into step with the fife and drum, follow him out. The men in the choir box leap over the low partition, not stopping to get out in the ordinary way. Gould Lewis rushes after Muhlenberg. His parents try to hold him back, but he breaks away from them, shouting:)

GOULD LEWIS.

Take me,too! Take me! Take me!

(The women in the church, including Dorothy and Esther, stand on the seats and the prayer stools, waving kerchiefs and fichus, some cheering, others weeping, as Muhlenberg comes down the aisle. The patriot women nearest him, catch at his hands and coattails. The church is a scene of the wildest uproar and excitement. Dorothy tries in vain to attract Muhlenberg's attention, but his glance is stern and he does not look at her. After Muhlenberg and the men have passed out, the rest of the people pour out into the churchyard and crowd among the gravestones. An old man pushes his son toward Peter; the mothers of the little boys, weeping, lead them up to him and offer them. The young men press around him, waving their hats and calling out their names.

MEN.

Job Hatch, Reuben Babcock, Seth Wilson, William Ru—

as the curtain falls.

ACT IV.

Scene 1.

A lonely crossroads. Time, late October, 1781. It is early in the morning, some days after Cornwallis' surrender, news of which has not yet reached Norristown. A tall, old-fashioned finger post with two arms reads, on one side "Ten miles to Chester," and on the other "Five miles to Tarrytown." The roads are bordered by low stone walls with blackberry vines running over them. In the distance are beautiful woods in autumn coloring. No one is in sight. A horseman is heard approaching at a smart canter. He dismounts off the stage (or on) and comes on leading his horse. The inscription on the finger post is somewhat dim and he peers sharply at it, taking from his pocket a paper of instructions, which he scans attentively. He is a young man, dressed after the fashion of a prosperous farmer, his hair in a queue, but unpowdered, and his hat a three-cornered one.

As the horseman reads, two slender, boyish figures in homespun and cocked hats rise cautiously from behind the stone fence at the man's back. One of these figures points a pistol at the horseman, while the other kneels behind the fence, resting on it a heavy Revolutionary musket. The boyish figures are Dorothy and Esther, attired in clothes belonging to Daniel.

DOROTHY.

Halt! Right about face. (The man puts a hand to his pistol, but turns toward the voice.)

DOROTHY.

You're covered, sir. Draw and you fall.

THE MAN (Silas Crouch).

What in hell do you want?

ESTHER.

You know well enough—those dispatches.

CROUCH.

Pooh, what dispatches?

DOROTHY.

You can't fool us, Silas Crouch. We know all about you. Give us those dispatches for Clinton.

CROUCH.

How in hell do yau know my name, twenty miles from home? I'll swear I don't know you from a side o' sole-leather. Even the boys in this damned country seem to be rebels.

DOROTHY.

Well, it's people like you that make it a damned country. Never mind how we know you, Silas, old boy. We've been laying for you for weeks. Now you're in our trap, and it's loaded—don't forget that.

(Crouch makes a quick move for his pistol.)

DOROTHY (shrieking).

Fire, Dan'l.

(Esther fires. The man gives a groan of pain and his right arm falls useless.)

CROUCH.

Now you've done it. How the devil am I to get backward or forward?

DOROTHY (vaulting the stone wall lightly, while Esther still keeps the man covered with Dorothy's pistol).

'Twas your own fault. I warned you how 'twould be. You're wasting your time and our powder. You're wanted at home, Silas Crouch, and we'll trouble you for your papers. The dispatches, an' you please.

CROUCH (sullenly, nursing his arm).

I've no dispatches. Somebody's been a-foolin' of ye. Search for yourself.

DOROTHY (over her shoulder).

Keep him cevered, Dan'l. This is a beastly business, ugh!

She begins to search him systematically, but gingerly, and with exceeding daintiness. She finds the papers finally in the lining of his hat, but not until she has turned all his pockets inside out, and left them hanging out, and has even removed his buckled shoes. In the beginning of the search she takes his pistols away from him and lays them very carefully on the stone fence near Esther.

DOROTHY (with great dignity).

That is all. You may go now, Mr. Crouch. You'll be just in time to see to the churning, if you hurry. These dispatches will go where they'll do the most good (reading). Ah, there are more stores! Good! We need 'em badly. (She attempts a swaggering laugh, but her voice trembles. She adds, gently) Does your arm hurt much? Shall I tie it up for you?

(She improvishes a sling from her handkerchief and Esther's,

Esther still keeping him covered, and then makes a rough tourniquet of her neckcloth.

DOROTHY.

Does it feel better?

CROUCH (sullenly).

Naw. Say, you're nothing but a boy. Gee, I'd never hear the last of it at home if they heard I'd been held up by a couple of lads. Say—seems to me I've seen your face afore.

(He makes an attempt to grab Dorothy, his design being to hold her between himself and Esther, but Dorothy is too quick for him, and jumps aside.)

DOROTHY.

No you don't. You always was a lumpkin and a coward. No wonder Nancy Van Alstine gave you the mitten.

CROUCH.

Nancy Van Alstine? Why, why, how did you know?

ESTHER (warningly).

Look out, Noah. You talk too much.

DOROTHY (haughtily).

Be gone, sir. Mount your horse and ride two hundred paces without looking back. Go in the direction from which you came or we'll put a bullet through your other arm, and then you can't ride at all.

CROUCH.

Say—hold up.

ESTHER.

Silence, sir. Obey orders or I shoot. Mount. (Crouch does so with great alacrity. His horse walks off the stage. He shouts back without turning his head, stopping his horse just before he reaches the wings.)

CROUCH.

I'll be even with you for this, you young scamps. My God—Dorothy Sutton's voice and Esther Hurlbut's—it was you who winged me, you Hurlbut brat. I'll be even with you and your father for this, Esther. Look out for your farm house and your barns—they may burn some fine windy night. (He laughs derisively.) As for you, Mistress Sutton—we're quits. Do you remember the stores you starved and sweated for in '77? They tasted mighty good to King George's men, I'll tell you, and the guns helped to kill some damned Yankee rebels in blue and buff—maybe that coxcomb of a brother of yours, Esther Hurlbut. Have your windows made higher from

the ground when you go to live with Peter at the parsonage, Dorothy.

(He laughs derisively, his voice dying away. Dorothy and Esther look at each other blankly, and then tear open the dispatches as the

CURTAIN FALLS.

Scene 2.

Time, later in the same day as Scene I. There need be no time lost between these two scenes, as the setting for the second scene may be arranged behind the drop curtain of the first. Scene, the lawn in front of the village inn, "Ye Fife and Drum." A large picture of General Washington, bearing the tavern name, swings gaily in front of the inn, suspended from an iron crane. There are tables spread on the lawn with canopies over them. The tables are piled with good things to eat and drink, and are decorated with flowers and autumn leaves. The tavern is colonial, with a wide porch, and in front of it is gathered a crowd, composed almost entirely of women and children of all ages, in gala dress, for the most part. There are a few feeble old men in the crowd. The children run out into the road and back again constantly to see if the soldiers are coming. Two or three women in black dresses stand apart, silently looking on. Prominent in the crowd is Mrs. Sutton, with her arms full of flowers. The young women are prettily dressed in light figured lawns. Fifes and drums are heard in the distance, becoming louder all the time. The landlord rushes out and waves his apron down the road in an excess of loyalty. The children run into the road and out of sight, and this time they do not come back. The women rush down to the gate and the head of the column of the Pennsylvania militia comes into view with fifers and drummers. The men have wreaths of flowers and autumn leaves around their necks; the little children ride on their fathers' shoulders; the older children run along at the side, clinging to the men's hands and trying to take long strides and to keep up. The women run forward, throw flowers around the men's necks and are clasped to their husbands' breasts. An old man hobbles forward on his stick, and is clasped in the arms of his son. One old woman scans every face as it passes her; then screams and faints as she does not find her son. She is carried into the tavern.

Muhlenberg, in a colonel's uniform, is at the head of his men, on foot. After each woman has decorated her own, she throws flowers over Muhlenberg until he is all but covered and laughingly protests against any more. Mrs. Sutton is with her husband, who wears the uniform of a captain. She hangs on his

shoulder. There is a perfect babel of laughter, kisses and voices.

A WOMAN SPEAKS.

Colonel Muhlenberg, we're proud of you. We know what a part you played at Yorktown—going to be mentioned in Congress for it, they say. Norristown is proud of ye. Next to His Excellency, by the grace o' God, you're the savior of our country.

MUHLENBERG.

Oh, nonsense, madam, a plain case of duty, that's all. I'm afraid the sword becomes me better than the crucifix. The order is given for the men to break ranks, and they crowd to embrace their women, and to eat and drink at the tables.

GOULD LEWIS.

Fie, he's too modest. It wasn't only at Yorktown. At Paulus Hook he got right in behind the raw malitia and turned a flight into a pursuit, saved the day, too. Huzza for Parson Peter—Soldier Peter—Colonel Peter!

THE CROWD.

Huzza! Huzza!

MUHLENBERG.

Gould, you always were incorrigible. Lots of trouble you've made me, trying to keep you out of hot water and get you home with a whole skin. Spare my German blushes. Huzza for the American States; Huzza for His Excellency, our beloved General Washington.

THE CROWD.

Huzza! Huzza!

GOULD LEWIS (striving to raise his voice above the tumult).

German nonsense! You're the best Yankee of the lot. (To Mrs. Sutton.) But where are Esther and Dorothy? I didn't expect to see my folks—they havn't forgiven me yet, I suppose—but I must confess that I did think to see Esther first of all. I was looking for her to come way down the road. Esther isn't one of the hanging back kind—or at least, she wasn't when I saw her last. She hasn't seen anybody she likes better, has she, Mrs. Sutton? She's written regular, dear little girl.

MRS. SUTTON.

Seen anybody? La' no, who would she see, in this man-forsaken country. Who would she see, pray, Old Daddy Tull? She didn't know you were coming, that's all, and no more did Dorothy. She and Dorothy have some terrible secret—

GOULD, MUHLENBERG AND SUTTON (in one breath).

Some terrible secret?

MRS. SUTTON (importantly).

Yes, the way they've been acting just worritted me to death—behaving like wild critters for a week—riding about country harum-scarum, gone all day and all night.

SUTTON (Aghast).

All night! Where did they go, pray?

MRS. SUTTON.

You tell. They wouldn't tell me, though I demanded to know, and then I begged and prayed them on my knees If the country hadn't been bare o' men almost, I'd have been frightened to death. But there's really nothing to harm them. We only got wind of the surrender o' Cornwallis this morning by a mounted messenger, and we didn't know whether to believe it or not—so much of the good news has been false—

SUTTON.

That's true enough.

MRS. SUTTON.

Of course we knew the war wasn't over—

SUTTON.

I'm not so sure about that—

MRS. SUTTON.

But then we heard as you were coming to-day, and (with housewifely pride) we've made all our preparations since them. I tell you we worked. I had no time to hunt for the girls, and shouldn't have known where to look for 'em anyhow. They'll be terribly disappointed, but it serves 'em right. (Peevishly.) I've no authority over Dorothy since you went away, Noah.

GOULD.

You never did have much. She always had her head and led Esther.

MUHLENBERG.

But such a clever head. You'll have to admit that. I hope nothing's happened to her.

SUTTON (to Gould).

You've no call to say that Dorothy was a ring-leader, Gould. Esther was always the mischief maker, though younger, from the time she got Dorothy to upset the churnin'. But this must stop.

(Enter Dorothy and Esther hastily, dusty, dishevelled, hot, tired, but triumphant, and still in boy's clothes.)

DOROTHY.

Well, for the love of Heaven, whit's this? Oh, good gracious, these clothes.

MRS. SUTTON (aghast).

Dorothy, Esther, for shame!

DOROTHY.

Father, oh, my dear, my dear!

(Dorothy throws herself in Sutton's arms. Esther runs to Gould and hugs him. Dorothy turns from her father to give her hand shyly to Muhlenberg, who stands near.

DOROTHY.

Mr. Muhlenberg, I owe you a thousand apologies. I know now who told about the stores. Long since I knew that it was not you. But the mystery's been cleared away this morning.

MRS. SUTTON.

I told you so!

MUHLENBERG.

Thank you, Mistress Dorothy. I was sure I'd be cleared some day, but I'm glad that you acquitted me in your own mind first.

DOROTHY.

And you don't care to know who it was?

MUHLENBERG.

Not unless you wish to tell me. It is enough that you are satisfied.

MRS. SUTTON.

Well, I never!

GOULD (calling out with his mouth full of cake and a glass of wine in his hand).

Say, Dolly, is this a masquerade? You look wonderfully well in those clothes. Esther they don't become.

MUHLENBERG.

To my mind, Miss Esther looks the better of the two.

SUTTON (rather sternly).

You must explain this to me, Dorothy. Your mother says she has no control over you. I can't have you running over the country in this madcap way. You'll be tavern-talk.

DOROTHY (appealingly).

Don't scold to-day, daddy. We'll never do it again—it won't be necessary. We'll tell you all about it, won't we, Esther? You see we only heard of the surrender of

Corney down the road, and we'd no idea you were coming home so soon. We wouldn't have had you see us this way for a good deal, would we, Esther? But we've finished an important piece of business, daddy, Esther and I—though I suppose it doesn't count for anything now. Oh, I don't see why Cornwallis had to surrender quite so soon.

MUHLENBERG.

Hear the child. On my life, she's actually sorry the war's ended—

SUTTON.

But what was the business? Out with it, Dolly.

DOROTHY.

Well, you know Silas Crouch—

ESTHER.

Of White House.

SUTTON.

Yes, a damned Tory.

DOROTHY.

I should say so. Well, we heard that he had been collecting stores and money from the Tory farmers about White House—it's a rich country, and there's a nest of them there—and that he was on his way to Chester with important dispatches.

MUHLENBERG.

Were there no men to do this?

DOROTHY (with great spirit).

Oh, men, men, men! Other people can do things besides men. When you preached that sermon of yours, you know everything in breeches followed you off, even the little shavers, just as the children followed after the Pied Piper of Hamelin. There was a few old decrepids with crutches left in the village, but we couldn't trust them, So Esther and I decided to wear some of poor Dan'l's clothes and go after him ourselves. Esther's a good shot, you know, and I was to do the talking—that's my forte. We thought he would go by the Tarrytown cross-roads and would reach there at about sunrise this morning. We rode all night, and nabbed him as he passed—and here we are. Here, also, are the dispatches..

MUHLENBERG.

Well done.

GOULD LEWIS AND SUTTON.

Hurray!

GOULD LEWIS.

Bully for you, Esther.

MRS. SUTTON (shocked).

Oh Dorothy.

DOROTHY (crossly).

Oh, don't look so much like a hen with a duck chick, mother. (Handing the despatches to Muhlenberg.) Of course they're of no importance now, but it was great fun getting them.

MUHLENBERG.

I don't know about their being of no use. These stores may be of importance to us yet, and the money certainly will be, if we can get at it before they take it away. It's by no means certain that there'll be no more fighting, though His Excellency thinks they've had enough of it. And it's important, too, to know who the traitors are. This shall go to headquarters, never fear, mistress mine, with a full account of the capture. I salute you, Lieutenants Esther and Dorothy—you'll be brevetted yet.

GOULD.

You're true grit, Esther, always were, all the way through. I'm so ashamed when I remember that I wouldn't lend you my horse that time. But say, did Crouch give you any trouble?

DOROTHY (loftily).

Oh, a little. Esther wingeh him.

MRS. SUTTON.

Girls, how dreadful. Oh, I wish you were both safely married. Nobody will want such hoydens.

MUHLENBERG.

Oh, I wouldn't worry about that.

GOULD.

And he didn't recognize you? He must be a fool. He's seen you often enough—danced with you, hasn't he?

ESTHER.

At first he didn't know us, but Dor—we talked a good deal more than was necessary—and at last he placed our voices. He said he'd burn our house and barns some fine night, and then he taunted Dorothy. He was the one who told about the stores.

GOULD.

Gee, it's great—You're a veteran yourself now, Esther. (They cross over to a side table to chat confidentially.)

SUTTON.

So he was the culprit. I never suspected you, Muhlenberg.

MUHLENBERG.

Thank you, sir.

DOROTHY.

I was much too hasty.

MRS. SUTTON, (severely).

I hope it will be a lesson to you, Dorothy.

THE INNKEEPER (appearing at the door of the tavern).

Captain Sutton, the countryside wishes to drink your very good health.

THE CROWD BEHIND HIM.

Aye, that we do, Neighbor Noah—Hear, hear, aye, aye!

SUTTON.

Thank you, Stearns. I'm glad to see you've changed your sign and your politics. "Ye Fife and Drum," and His Excellency's picture is mush more acceptable to us than "The Bluebells of Scotland," and "Red-nosed George the Third."

THE INNKEEPER (embarassed and sheepish).

Yes, sir; oh, yes, indeed. I'm very loyal, I am, sir.
(Mr. and Mrs. Sutton go in arm in arm.)

DOROTHY (bowing mockingly to Muhlenberg).

Oh, it will all be a lesson to me, I am sure. But without it you might still be a parson, not a colonel.

MUHLENBERG.

You prefer me this way?

DOROTHY.

Indeed I do. I'll be more polite to you now. I consider your clothes very becoming, and the sword much mightier than the cassock.

MUHLENBERG.

You are bewitching in those clothes—too much so when there are other people about.

DOROTHY.

Oh, I see, that is why you said that nasty thing about Esther looking better in them than I—thank you.

(They go off the stage together at the opposite side from where Gould and Esther are. Gould and Esther talk from the table, he sitting on the edge of the table with a mug in his hand and a huge slice of cake.)

GOULD.

It reminds me of a play I read down in Philadelphia—

ESTHER (shocked).

A play!

GOULD (his mouth full).

Yes, that's nothing compared to what soldiers do. It was about Capulets and Montagues who fought, and a girl from one side and a fellow from the other who loved each other. It played the deuce with them, their fathers not agreeing, but we won't let it with us, will we, Esther? We're on the same side now, and the old folks can fight it out between themselves for all we care. But I did think that father and mother would be down here to forgive me when I got home, specially seeing as we beat. (Esther refills his glass and plies him with cookies). It's good to be on the winning side—father always changed his politics when a new ministry came in.

ESTHER.

I think they'll come 'round, Gould, when they see how manly you've grown. It's made a man of you and they won't be able to resist—an only son, too.

GOULD (swelling out his chest).

Well, war will make a man of you if anything will. See my moustache, Esther?

DOROTHY.

I don't see anything.

GOULD, (disappointed).

You don't? I can see it.

ESTHER.

It must be the eye of faith then—your mother has always been worrying about your religious convictions—though she doesn't know you've taken to reading wicked plays—and she'll be glad to hear you have faith enough to see something so intangible. (Archly) Perhaps I could feel it—I'm very sensative that way.

GOULD (bending toward her and rubbing her cheek and then kissing her shyly and boyishly).

Can you? Stop laughing, Esther. Now that I've been through battles you shan't treat me like a boy.

ESTHER.

Let me see—almost the last lengthy conversation I had with you, you refused to lend me your horse because your father mignt cane you. Shouldn't wonder if he'd do

it now, seeing that you're home safe and sound, in spite of the hairy lip. He'll certainly do it if you tell him you're going to marry me. Your father and mine hate each other like poison, and spit at each other over the fence to the back meadows.

GOULD (earnestly).

Esther, I'm a veteran, and my father can go to the devil. I can take care of you—we're all to have fine lands in the far west given to us—out along the banks of the Ohio.

ESTHER (clapping her hands enthusiastically).

On the Ohio—my, how interesting, and there'll be bears and deer and wolves and Indians to shoot at. Splendid.

GOULD.

Oh, that's my brave wilderness girl—a real pioneer. I knew you'd like it. But if you are going to the Ohio with me, you'll have to treat me better. I'm to be your husband and your master, mind—

ESTHER.

You don't look it.

GOULD.

But it says "obey" in the prayer book.

ESTHER.

Pooh, I don't care. It takes more than saying "obey" to make one do it. The better man in the house is the one obeyed, and he doesn't always wear the small clothes.

GOULD (sadly).

That's true enough—in our house, for instance. But you promised to marry me, and I love you, dear, and when Dan'l was dying he said: "Take care of little Esther, and be good to her, Gould," and I'm going to try. You see he expected it.

ESTHER (saddened).

Dear Dan'l. Nobody even thinks of him this glad day. He was a dear, brave boy. Washington wrote father a lovely letter about him, did you know? Mother couldn't bear to come here to-day, since Dan'l wasn't coming. There are some things that even two years don't heal. But sometimes I think it was best he should die. Dorothy would never have married him. She didn't love him, you know, and he'd have been so disappointed and unhappy.

GOULD.

Hers was the last name on his lips.

ESTHER.

Dorothy honestly tried, but she loves the parson, and has for years, and now that he's a patriot what should part them?

GOULD.

What indeed? But being a patriot doesn't seem to make you in love with me, Esther. You cared more when I was selling garden truck to the British up river. I turned for your sake, and I don't believe that Parson Peter did what he did for Dorothy.

ESTHER.

Don't you dare say that, Gould Lewis. You turned because the power of Almighty God moved you in Parson Peter's sermon. Wasn't I there? Didn't I hear him and see you? It was as if the Angel Gabriel stood before us, or that other one with the flaming sword. My, I can feel how my spine thrilled and trembled, and the very hair rose on my head. Don't you dare to lay your conversion to me, Gould Lewis.

GOULD.

Oh, well, I thought it would please you. We men never can tell what you women are going to do—especially we soldier men.

ESTHER.

Stuff! I'll wager Parson Peter knows what Dorothy is going to do.

GOULD.

Let's go and ask them.

(Gould and Esther go out as Muhlenberg and Dorothy come on at the other side.)

MUHLENBERG.

And if I'd been killed, Dorothy?

DOROTHY.

I shall never tell you how sorry I would have been.

MUHLENBERG (smiling, then frowning).

That may mean much or nothing.

DOROTHY.

Really?

MUHLENBERG (pleadingly).

Don't trifle, Dorothy. I've waited so long.

DOROTHY.

Yes, but you didn't tell me you were going to join our army until you announced it publicly, and there's been little enough chance even to hear from you since. I should have thought you would have wanted me to know first.

MUHLENBERG.

I warned you.

DOROTHY.

Was that the night you decided?

MUHLENBERG.

Yes; when Washington threw that cloak around Nathan Baldwin's shoulders, I became a patriot on the instant.

DOROTHY.

So simple a thing. How beautiful—so it was not at all for my sake?

MUHLENBERG (stoutly).

No; for right's sake.

DOROTHY.

I like you better for that.

MUHLENBERG.

But how much is better, Dorothy?

DOROTHY.

Oh, well enough to make you unhappy with my forked tongue.

MUHLENBERG.

I took my choice, dear. If I'd enlisted under King George I'd have been picked off by your American sharpshooters. Now my foibles will be picked off by a sharpshooter in my own household—one from whom I shall not want to escape. But one can't escape wounds in this world—the only thing is to choose where we'll have them, and from whom.

DOROTHY.

I'll try to be meek.

MUHLENBERG.

Don't, dear. It would be so unnatural and you'll only make yourself ill and me lonesome. Besides, I'll be excused from purgatory in the next world.

DOROTHY.

Oh. fie, to pursue that advantage. I see, sir, you love our country much more than you do me, or you wouldn't talk so.

MUHLENBERG.

Yes, just as you love Washington more than you do me.

DOROTHY.

Yes, it's just as we love God best, or say we do, but we don't act as if we did. Everbody loves Washington best.

L. of C.

MUHLENBERG.

I shall be proud to take second place. There is no greater test of my love. But you're sure you prefer an officer's epaulets to a bishop's sleeves? I've been offered a place in public life, or I can go back to the church. Which shall it be, Dorothy?

DOROTHY.

I hate ruffles on a man—it reminds me of our curled and perfumed royal governors. Swords to ruffles every time, if it rests with me.

MUHLENBERG.

So be it—I've no choice so long as you look after the sword or the ruffles.
(Gould and Esther, Mr. and Mrs. Sutton enter.)

GOULD (Smiling radiantly).

Shall it be a double wedding, Dolly?

DOROTHY.

No, indeed. Every girl has the right to be the center of interest at her own wedding—she'll never be again. I don't want to share even with Esther. Besides (with dignity) Peter and I are much older and Esther must be my bridesmaid—you'll have to wait a few years.

ESTHER.

And I want Parson Peter to marry us.

DOROTHY (with dignity).

I don't know about that, Esther. It's too bad to disappoint you, but he's thinking of remaining in civil life. We've just been discussing it.

GOULD.

Well, I swan—you can do anything with him, Dorothy. Only fancy his giving up the church permanently for you. I believe he loves you more than he does America.

DOROTHY.

No: not that. That's the one thing he puts above me.

GOULD (surprised).

And you stand that, Dorothy? I wouldn't have thought it.

MRS. SUTTON.

She never would from us.

DOROTHY.

I glory in it.

MRS. SUTTON.

Well, thank Heaven, you girls are both to be safely married. It's a relief to my mind.

SUTTON (clasping Dorothy in his arms).

My dear, brave, little Dorothy—my one daughter. Lord, but we'll miss you.

DOROTHY.

Your little girl always, father.

THE CROWD (inside the inn and on the porch clinking glasses).

Huzza for the American States! Huzza for His Excellency, General Washington, huzza, huzza!

CURTAIN.

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